

## **Abstract**

This research report focuses on an area of study that has been long overdue in the field of HIV/Aids education. In spite of multiple interventions to curb the spread of the disease using methodologies drawn from different fields of study, the HIV/Aids pandemic does not seem to be abetting. Hence contemporary development discourse has to engage with people's culture as a possible alternative to influencing behaviour change. Applied drama and theatre has emerged as one such possibility due to its interactive, dialogic, participatory, distanced yet empathic mode of communication. It is in the light of popular culture's relevance to the field of HIV/Aids communication that this study bears particular significance.

Culture has been regarded as a driving force in the transmission of HIV/Aids through certain traditional ideologies such as patriarchy which is understood as a system that favours male dominance over women. The study employs the technique of subversion in popular culture to frame such an ideology in the performance interventions done by the Interactive Themba Theatre Company. In studies addressing HIV/Aids, a realisation has been made that information disseminated in development interventions has not impacted on the sustainability of most projects. There is need for engaging in dialogue with performances as it is imperative to understand what motivates people's behaviour, and through the incorporation of techniques in popular culture that frame reality, address these motivations appropriately. Through the incorporation of popular culture techniques such as syncretism, subversion, orality, adaptation, adoption and language, the study focuses on how popular culture frames performance interventions at the ITTC.